

often generate far greater exposure via associated news coverage and media debate than the ads themselves.<sup>13 14</sup>

The impotency issue also holds potential to subvert decades of tobacco industry cultivation of smoking as a symbol of male potency. If widespread publicity came to forge a natural apposition between the cigarette and a vision of a flaccid dejected penis, the semiotics of smoking may change radically.

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## ECHO

### Investigating the relation between placement of Quit antismoking advertisements and number of telephone calls to Quitline: a semiparametric modelling approach

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Please visit the Tobacco Control website [[www.tobaccocontrol.com](http://www.tobaccocontrol.com)] for a link to the full text of this article.

**Study objectives:** Quitline—an antismoking advertising and a telephone helpline service—is an effective public health intervention strategy for tobacco control. The objective of this short report is to model the relation between placement of antismoking advertisements and calls to Quitline on a given day.

**Methods/design:** Data on daily Quitline antismoking advertisements, television target audience rating points (TARPS), and calls to Quitline Victoria were studied for the period 1 August 2000 and 31 July 2001. The outcome—calls to Quitline—is a count and thus assumed to follow a Poisson distribution. Generalised partial linear models were used to model the logarithm of mean daily calls as a non-parametric function of time and a linear parametric function of the day of week, number of advertisements, and TARPS.

**Main results:** Peak calls to Quitline Victoria occurred during Monday to Wednesday with around three times as many calls compared with Sunday. Both placement of Quitline advertisements ( $p < 0.001$ ) and an increase in TARPS ( $p < 0.001$ ) on a given day significantly increased the number of calls made to Quitline Victoria. The model adequately captured fluctuations in call volume and diagnostics showed no model inadequacy.

**Conclusions:** In this short report the emphasis is on modelling the parametric components—day of week, placement of advertisements, and TARPS on call volume. The dynamics of the underlying time trend in call volume is captured in a non-parametric component. Future analysis of hourly data would provide additional information to assess different media buying strategies that might increase call volume.

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